

Measures to Overcome High School Students' Writing Anxiety

Yang Xiao

School of China West Normal University, Sichuan, China

Abstract

As a language output activity, English writing is a common and even indispensable part of English learning and it is also one of the skills that most students find difficult to master. However, in actual learning, some students have writing anxiety when faced with English writing tasks, which will affect the normal play of their English writing ability and even lead to avoidance behaviors. By analyzing the current situation and causes of English writing anxiety, this paper aims to provide some useful English writing strategies and psychological methods for English teachers to relieve students' English writing anxiety, alleviate writing anxiety and its negative effects, and improve students' confidence and efficiency in English writing.

Keywords

English Writing; Writing Anxiety; High School Students.

1. Introduction

Writing is an important and necessary skill for all students. It can not only test and expand students' vocabulary, improve their vocabulary and writing skills, but also exercise their logical thinking and analysis ability, and improve their comprehensive language application ability. Many teaching practices have found that students are prone to tension and anxiety in the process of English writing. These emotions will have a great impact on the writing process. For a long time, many educational teaching activities and research have paid more attention to students' learning achievement or cognitive output.

Kim (1982) pointed out that learners' emotional factors play a key role in the process of language input and language internalization, and negative emotional factors (such as anxiety and lack of self-confidence) will hinder the success of second language acquisition. Yu Guoliang and Dong Yan (2005) pointed out that a good academic mood is conducive to the smooth development of students' cognitive activities, the formation of a proactive learning attitude, the establishment of a good teacher-student relationship, and the healthy development of students' physical and mental health. On the contrary, negative academic emotions, such as boredom and anxiety, will have a negative impact on students' learning and development.

By analyzing the current situation and causes of English writing anxiety, this paper aims to provide English teachers with some useful English writing strategies and psychological methods to relieve students' English writing anxiety, reduce writing anxiety and its negative effects, and improve students' confidence and efficiency in English writing.

2. Writing Anxiety

The term writing anxiety was first proposed by Daly and Miller (1975), which mainly refers to the anxiety that learners have during the writing process, such as resistance and fear of teacher's evaluation. Two researchers compiled the Writing Apprehension Test to measure students' writing anxiety, which has been widely used in the related studies of L2 writing anxiety. Bloom (1980) defines it as a manifestation of one or more emotions or behaviors that interfere with an individual's ability to begin, perform, or complete a writing task that he or she

is capable of accomplishing. Weiner (1983) believes that writing anxiety is a state beyond the normal degree of psychological tension, that is, learners feel strong anxiety and fear in the process of foreign language writing, which affects the success of foreign language learners in writing. Writing anxiety is associated with specific situations in which learners avoid foreign language writing (Scott & Rockwell, 1997:47).

Gao Lili (2014) proposed that English anxiety refers to the emotional state of fear of English learning caused by the frustration of self-esteem and self-confidence caused by unattainable goals or insurmountable learning obstacles in the process of English learning. Fu Rong (2021) believes that English anxiety is a comprehensive anxiety related to English learning, which is generated in the process of processing English information (including self-image, cognition, perception and behavior).

Based on the previous definitions of foreign language anxiety, foreign language anxiety refers to the state of nervousness, anxiety and worry in the whole process when an individual is exposed to or exposed to a foreign language environment due to the influence of individual factors and situational factors, and is accompanied by implicit or explicit physical or behavioral anxiety.

3. Causes of High School Students' English Writing Anxiety

3.1. Lack of Basic Knowledge of English Writing.

In the process of English learning, high school students often encounter difficulties in vocabulary acquisition and do not have a good grasp of grammar. Some students believe that the lack of necessary English vocabulary and grammar is a big obstacle in the process of English writing. On the one hand, in the process of English writing, students always can't find relevant words to express their ideas; On the other hand, although students know which words can be used in the composition, they are unable to spell the words correctly (Chen,2019). In this way, students gradually feel anxious or nervous in the process of English writing. In addition, some students explain that without proper grammar help, they can not use some words to make accurate and smooth sentences to express their meaning and ideas, which is one of the reasons that makes them afraid of English writing.

3.2. Fear of Negative Feedback

Most high school students fear being judged negatively by teachers or classmates. The fear of negative evaluation is an important cause of English anxiety. In the traditional English writing teaching process, teachers often point out students' mistakes and then give them a final grade, rarely giving them encouragement or praise for their progress over a period of time. In this case, students are prone to be afraid of difficulties or lose self-confidence in English writing. At the same time, if students get a low score on their compositions, they will worry about being laughed at by their classmates. In this way, students are more likely to have anxiety in the process of English writing.

3.3. Emphasis on Test Scores

In the teaching process, some teachers take the score of English tests as the main criterion to judge the quality of students' English ability, and they are more inclined to teach students how to use certain skills to gain the advantage of scores in daily teaching, rather than really improve students' English ability (Lan,2013). Students will see English writing as a means to get high marks, rather than a tool to express their own opinions. In addition, the improvement of writing ability requires a long-term process, and it is difficult for students to see the results of their efforts in one or two exams. However, some teachers put too much emphasis on test scores, resulting in huge psychological pressure on students, who will think that their efforts have not

been rewarded. In the long run, students will have anxiety about English writing and even hate writing.

4. Suggestions to Overcome Writing Anxiety

Senior high school English teachers need to take various measures in different stages of writing to help students to relieve their English writing anxiety, give full play to their English writing ability, and improve the efficiency of English writing.

4.1. Strengthen Students' Intrinsic Motivation in English Writing

In order to reduce students' negative behaviors and emotions in English writing, English teachers should: first, improve students' interest in English writing. In the process of writing teaching, teachers can fully explore the life of teaching content. Therefore, teachers can flexibly construct interesting multi-sensory life-oriented communication scenes in writing class with multimedia technology, combine the writing theme with students' familiar life and personal experience, and control the difficulty within students' recent development zone to improve students' acceptance of English writing. Close the distance between English writing and students, stimulate students to express enthusiasm and interest in writing. Second, assign cooperative English writing tasks. When students are allowed to complete English writing tasks independently, there will be negative behaviors such as procrastination, while when they complete English writing tasks cooperatively, students' individual writing cognition and anxiety caused by others' evaluation will be reduced, and they will think more about how to help, discuss and cooperate with their partners to complete a satisfactory English composition, and their writing motivation will be enhanced.

4.2. Pay Attention to English Writing Process Teaching

Most high school students believe that their lack of English writing skills in the face of English writing tasks is one of the main causes of English writing anxiety. Therefore, in order to alleviate students' English writing anxiety, English teachers should not only pay attention to the results and quality of students' English writing, but also pay attention to the process of students' English writing to improve English writing teaching (Li Sen, 2000). It includes the methods adopted by students, such as examination, structural cohesion and diction, to give students basic English writing skills or help students master writing skills in the process of English writing teaching. After students have mastered the basic writing skills, teachers can show the composition or paragraph with wrong content or structure to make students perfect, or require students to copy, rewrite or expand according to excellent model essays and sentences, so that high school students can train and become proficient on the basis of understanding English writing methods.

4.3. Create a Positive Writing Environment

Teachers should create a positive writing environment to help students relieve writing anxiety. On the one hand, in daily writing teaching, teachers should not only pay attention to the deficiencies or mistakes in grammar, spelling and other aspects of students' articles, but also learn to explore the highlights of students' articles, and guide students in a good way to help them build up confidence. When students make progress in their writing, teachers can use encouraging language and positive feedback to stimulate students' learning motivation (Wang Song et al., 2021). Only in this way can students face the difficulties encountered in writing more confidently and relieve the anxiety of writing. On the other hand, teachers should create an environment for students to express their ideas freely. Teachers can carry out more group discussions, brainstorming and other activities in classroom teaching, so that they can fully

express their opinions on a certain issue, so as to cultivate students' creative thinking and critical thinking.

5. Conclusion

In a word, teachers and students should take corresponding measures to relieve students' anxiety in each stage of English writing. The pre-writing stage, and English teachers should cooperate with students to prepare for the pre-writing stage. After the completion of writing, both teachers and students should conduct self-reflection and evaluation, guide students to take positive reaction behaviors, and alleviate the existing anxiety of English writing.

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